Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0442AL-1 for Montgomery Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Alabama Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010.

The applicant concisely and convincingly addresses strategies to build on each of the four core assurance areas as evidenced by:

- The Alabama College- and Career-Ready Initiative established standards benchmarked to international standards and adoption of the Common Core State Standards
- The District invested $2.9 million in Compass Learning that provides data collection systems and personal learning tools based on college- and career-ready standards
- A teacher and principal incentive program based on student growth will be implemented to reward teachers and principals.
- Extensive professional development is planned for teachers and principals to develop Project-Based Learning Leadership Teams
- The ITS Data Management System will collect, manage, and provide accurate and up to date data on progress towards standards mastery and will allow all stakeholders to make informed decisions.
- The District will addressing their lowest achieving schools through a comprehensive student-centric strategy that links College- and Career-standards, teacher and student incentives, professional development, a data management system, personal learning environments, project-based learning, and Saturday Academies.

With the goal to provide each student with a personal learning environment that understands and responds to his/her strengths, challenges, interests, and thinking and learning styles, Montgomery Public Schools has fully addressed the criteria and scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to implement its proposal with high quality as evidenced by:

- Including all fifty-two schools in the district which supports a unified district vision.
- A collaborative decision by the Personal Learning Environment Planning Committee in conjunction with Superintendent.

The applicant provides a comprehensive set of data for each school including:

- School by school ethnicity data
- Students from low-income families
- Number of participating students who are high-need,
- Persistently lowest achieving schools
- Low-performing schools
- Number of teachers
- Number of administrators

All participating schools collectively meet the eligibility criteria and comprehensive data was submitted. However, the number of participating educators was missing from some of the schools. Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the middle of the high range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly describes district-wide reform and change to improve student outcomes in all schools including:

- Delineated logic model addressing reading and math "situations" for 3rd, 8th, and 11th grade students including inputs and outputs.

- The theory of change is based on restructuring the relationship of the student to the teacher and content.

The applicant sets out the following goals for this project: 1) increase the knowledge and skills of teachers, 2) personalize the learning environment for each student, 3) alter the relationship of the student to the teacher and the learning environment, 4) provide transparency of student work for parents, and 5) provide teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations that incorporate student outcomes.

Because the proposal includes all schools in the district each year of implementation, scaling up beyond participating schools is not applicable, therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sets forth a vision that is very likely to result in the goals set by the District. Given the current status of the district's student achievement, the goals are achievable. Evidence of achievable and ambitious goals are:

- Increase graduation rates from 66% to 85%
- Increase college enrollment from 45% to 63%

However, student performance goals are not necessarily ambitious nor equal to ESEA State targets as evidenced by the following goals:

- Overall reading scores from 31.77% in 2011-12 to 49% in 2015-16
- Overall math scores from 28.04% in 2011-12 to 47% in 2015-16

There seems to be a problem with the goals set for minority students in 5th grade math and 6th grade math. For 5th grade, the baseline 2010-11 is 46% and the goal for 2012-13 starts at 38%. Baseline for 6th grade is 46% and the goal for 2012-13 is 36%.

The district accurately refers to their current student achievement as the "achievement abyss." Thus a refreshing recognition that true reform must take place for all schools, teachers, administrators and students. While goals are ambitious based on past performance of very modest gains over last four years in both reading and math, the District cannot settle for 47% of minority 7th grade students meeting math standards at the end of this project in four years. At the planned rate of improvement, it will take an additional eight years for 85% of the students to meet standards.

The applicant provides an excellent portrayal of minority students as compared to Caucasian students at each grade level – the gap being as much as 45 percentage points (3rd grade reading).

The applicant has thoroughly evaluated its data and has set achievable goals. However, because the student achievement goals are not as ambitious as they could be, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high end of the medium range.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's record of success in advancing student learning and achievement is marginal as evidenced by:

- Very low student assessment results in both reading and mathematics. For example, just 32% of minority students overall scored CCR Level 4 in reading last year and just 28% of minority students overall scored CCR Level 4 in math last year.
- A large achievement gap between African- American and Caucasian students. For example, a 30 to 35 percentage point difference between African-American and Caucasian 3rd graders who scored college- and career-ready in reading.
- Very little movement in reducing achievement gaps from 2006/07 to 2009/10. For example only a 3% closure of the difference over the last four years

However, the applicant's conditions for reform are clearly in place. The District clearly portrays the commitment to improved student achievement and equity and has made bold and significant reforms under the current leadership. For example, after failing to meet AYP six out of the past seven years, the District reconstituted Lee High. The district identifies all low performing and persistently lowest achieving schools and sets the same, achievable and ambitious goals for all schools. The commitment to all students is impressive.

The State's INOW data management system currently provides parents with attendance records, grades, and discipline actions through a password protected portal and the proposal will include access to daily student performance data. The application is strengthened by use of INOW, as it provides access to students, parents, and teachers to daily student performance data and alerts teachers to the need for interventions.

Due to the marginal track record of success, this places Montgomery Public Schools at the top of the medium range for this section.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal states that the State of Alabama requires all public schools post detailed budgets and financial information on their websites to ensure financial transparency, but does not address detailed financial information such as access to the level of expenditures from state and local funds. This lack of information regarding specific expenditures places Montgomery Public Schools at the low end of the medium range for this section.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Sufficient autonomy exists at the State level to implement personalized learning as evidenced by two existing Alabama districts implementing personalized learning environments:

- Piedmont City Schools became the first high school in Alabama to implement a one-to-one personal learning initiative
- Huntsville City Schools which offers a 1:1 learning environment and has transitioned to all digital textbooks

This section would have been stronger if the applicant had provided evidence of District (LEA) conditions and autonomy to support the implementation of personalized learning environments. Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the bottom of the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant meaningfully engaged diverse stakeholder involvement in the design of its proposal as evidenced by:

- Letters of support from included from State Superintendent of Education, Governor, Mayor, Representative, and State Senator
- Very diverse Planning & Advisory Committee including teachers, principals, central office staff and community leaders
- Supportive Email responses from school personnel during the application design period
- Unanimous approval by the Montgomery Board of Education

While the proposal has broad stakeholder involvement in the development of the application and strong letters of support, the applicant did not describe how the input and feedback was used to revise and refine the application. Therefore, the Montgomery Public Schools scores in the bottom of high range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant makes a compelling case for addressing its large achievement gaps, low graduation rates, and low student achievement as evidenced by:

- A significant achievement gap, declining reading and math scores from elementary to middle school, a low graduation rate, and a need for an adequate data management system

The applicant provides a clear and concise rationale for continued implementation of personalized learning to directly address improving student achievement including a high quality plan for Personal Learning Goals. Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant thoroughly describes its plans to provide all students support to graduate college and career ready.

A high quality plan focused on learning includes Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal. The plan includes the following:

- A high-quality web-based learning management system that includes mastery-based instruction and assessment aligned with college-and career ready standards and the required infrastructure to allow access to the learning management system during school, afterschool, and weekends.
- Saturday Academies twice per month for all K – 12 students to provide remediation, acceleration, and opportunities to participate in project-based learning activities.
- Focusing on project-based learning will help teachers transition from their role as traditional classroom teacher to a facilitator.
- A tablet computer for every teacher and student will provide access to the web-based learning management system recently purchased by MPS, CompassLearning® Odyssey.
- Odyssey software system allows students to identify and pursue learning and development goals aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Feedback and guidance teaches students to structure their learning to achieve their short- and long-term goals, and to get instant feedback on their progress in meeting their individual goals.
- Student incentives for academic growth will be provided based on the average increase in Global Scholar scores for each school.
- Three community centers located in highly-populated low-income neighborhoods and three large faith-based institutions will be equipped with wireless internet service to provide a location for students and their families to have internet access during the evening and weekends.

The well thought through plan to engage students in their own learning and transform teachers into facilitators of learning results in Montgomery Public Schools scoring in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant thoroughly addresses providing all teachers and administrators the support to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards.

A high quality plan focused on teaching and leading includes Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal. The plan includes the following:

- A Teacher Leader Team will be formed for each grade in K – 5 and for each core subject area by grade in grades 6 –

- 12.
- District-wide surveys will be distributed quarterly during the first and second year of implementation and annually each year afterwards to assess teachers' perceptions.
- Communities of Practice for Personal Learning will be formed for each grade in K-5 and for each subject area by grade in grades 6 – 12.
- Five days of professional development will be required for all teachers and principals prior to the beginning of school in fall 2013.
- Professional development will enable teachers to effectively implement the Odyssey personal learning environment software as a teaching tool, develop and facilitate project-based learning activities, and use effective classroom management strategies.
- An electronic dash board will link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resource systems to provide effective feedback and improve practice.
- Teachers will be evaluated utilizing the EDUCATEAlabama system.
- Teachers will be offered the opportunity to participate in a school-wide teacher incentive program.
- MPS will spend the first year of program implementation developing a teacher/principal/ superintendent evaluation system that includes student growth that will be implemented 2014-2015.
- The results of the evaluations will be used to design and require targeted professional development that will decrease the achievement gap and increase student performance.

The applicant provides a well thought through plan to support teaching and leading with a crystal clear focus on the data necessary for the classroom teacher.

Because it is unclear how the project will provide sufficient training, systems and practices to support school leaders and leadership teams in a continuous improvement process, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the middle of the high range in this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	**15**	**15**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses practices policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning as evidenced by:

- All of the Race3 staff members will be housed in a centralized MPS office to facilitate collaboration, communication, and positive interactions with staff in other offices.
- Each school has a school leadership team comprised of the principal, assistant principal, and three or four senior-level teachers.
- Students have the flexibility to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery of the standards associated with the course.
- MPS will develop a policy of full transparency of academic records and attendance via a web portal.
- Odyssey personal learning software is adaptable and accessible to all students and includes a Learning English program that has been highly effective in achieving fluency in English Language Learners.

Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant goes beyond addressing school infrastructure to support personalized learning as evidenced by:

- All students, parents, and teachers will have access to the personalized learning environment at school and during the evenings and weekends.
- The proposed project will update the infrastructure of each school to provide sufficient bandwidth for all classrooms to access the Odyssey personal learning
- A full-time technical support staff member will be dedicated to assisting teachers, students, and parents with technological support
- The Odyssey software program allows students and parents to export information related to their personal learning goals, recommended remediation plan, standards that have not been mastered, to other electronic learning systems

- MPS will create an electronic dash board which will link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resource systems
- The electronic dashboard created by will align assessment data with STI-Information Now scheduling information to assign assessment data to actual teachers which instruct students in the tested subjects
- A high quality plan for Data Management Goals includes Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal.

Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes a process to provide timely and regular feedback on progress as evidenced by:

- A comprehensive set of program data will be collected and analyzed including 31 unique indicators.
- The results of these data will be reviewed quarterly by program staff and MPS administrators and presented at each Quarterly Race3 Stakeholder's Meeting.
- The program data will be used to determine progress towards meeting program goals and objectives.
- A summary report of program data will be posted quarterly on the MPS website.
- Projected and actual budget summaries will be posted annually.

Because the proposal does not address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the medium high range.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes multiple strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. For example:

- Program satisfaction surveys to receive feedback and suggestions for improvement
- Quarterly assemblies to update stakeholders on program successes, challenges, and recommendations for changes
- An article published quarterly in the school newspapers summarizing program data results
- External stakeholders will be invited to attend quarterly public assemblies
- A press release will be issued to all media sources in Montgomery each quarter
- The Race3 Stakeholder's Advisory Committee will meet quarterly

Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified the following performance measures:

- Highly Effective Teachers and Administrators. With a baseline of 30% HEQTs, the end of the grant goal is 50%. A 5% increase in this measure is not ambitious. For K-5 minority students the baseline is 18% with a goal of 38%. This goal is not equitable and the gap must be reduced at a higher rate for minority students. These goals are achievable, but not ambitious.
- Effective teachers and principals. With a baseline of 61% HEQTs, the end of the grant goal is 81%. For 6-8 minority students the baseline is 48% with a goal of 68%. This goal is not equitable and the gap must be reduced at a higher rate for minority students. These goals are achievable, but not necessarily ambitious
- K-3 has identified 1) Alabama Reading and math test 2) SIR and 3) % days missed due to out of school suspensions. Unable to determine the baseline and growth scores for SIR. For k-3 students, the measurement of out of school suspensions is most likely negligible.
- 4-8 has identified 1) Alabama reading test at Level 4, 2) Alabama math test at Level 4, and 3) SIR. Unable to determine

the baseline and growth scores for SIR.

- 9-12 has identified 1) FAFSA, 2) On track to college and career as measured by Alabama High School Graduation Exam in math and reading, 3) Career ready as measured by Alabama High School Graduation Exam in math and reading and one other area.

The applicant is missing 9-12d) grade appropriate academic leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan and 9-12e) grade level appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan (SIR is listed in text, but no data is provided).

There appears to be a disconnect with the Alabama High School Graduation Exam as the passing rate is 86% while the percentage of on-time graduates is 62% using the conversion to the 4-year cohort method of calculating graduation rates. This performance measure may need to be modified.

While the goals are achievable, not all are ambitious enough to be on track for career and college. For example, just 17% of 8th grade minority students meet the reading standards and yet the goal at the end of the grant is just 41%. Only 14% of those same students met the math standard and the end of the grant goal is 55%. The goals need to be reviewed carefully for equity. In addition, the applicant did not address how it will review and improve the measures over time. Therefore, this places Montgomery in the low range for this section.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the funded activities as evidenced by the following:

- The summative evaluation will validate that the program approach is being implemented as specified
- The evaluator will review evaluation activities, completing evaluation documents for every activity and quarterly review of progress to use findings for improvement
- The evaluator will hold quarterly evaluation meetings to update, refocus, interpret interim findings, and examine the program's strengths and weaknesses
- Quantitative measures include number of participants, participant retention rate, attendance records, pre-test and posttest data from survey responses of students prior to (pretest) and after the program
- Surveys will be developed to measure 1) teachers' teaching efficacy, awareness of best-practices, knowledge level; 2) students' progress in reaching grade level on college- and career-ready standards in language/reading and math; and 3) program effectiveness and demographic information
- Qualitative measures include interview and observation of project in action
- All forms of evaluation will be used in making programmatic changes

Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the high range. Nothing is missing from this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal clearly sets out a detailed budget and budget narrative for each of the 6 projects:

1. Personalized Education

2. Project-Based Learning

3. Saturday Academics

4. Teacher Incentives

5. Student Incentives

6. Data Management System

Each budget includes a description of funds.

One-time costs are identified as well as operational costs.

Investments in technology, software, and training are made up front in year one.

While the teacher ($5,082,103) and student ($3,275,982) incentives are meant to provide motivation, at 20% of the project budget, these costs do not seem reasonable nor will this strategy ensure the long-term sustainability of personalized learning environments. In addition, because the budgets do not include other funds being used to support the project, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the center of the high range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal addresses sustainability of the project goals after the term of the grant as evidenced by:

- Incentives taper off over the four years of the project.
- Project continuation post-funding will be obtained through Title I, Title II, and the State of Alabama Textbook Allocation.
- MPS will receive $2,350,350 per year which will provide for the continuation of the critical elements of the project which will cost $2,312,860.
- Proposal includes an annual post funding budget for the program.

Because the proposal does not include all of the components of a high quality plan for sustainability (Key Goals, Activities, Timeline, Deliverables, and Responsible Party for each goal), Montgomery Public Schools scores in the middle range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes integration of public and private resources in partnership to augment the school's resources to address the social needs of high risk students. The project includes:

- MPS has formed a partnership with Montgomery Education Foundation and Alabama State University to provide mentoring and one-on-one assistance in the classrooms and afterschool for high-needs students.
- The foundation will providing retired teachers and principals to serve as facilitators for high-need students in the classrooms.
- A consortium of Alabama State University undergraduate organizations has committed their time to volunteer as tutors and mentors during the school day and after school for high-need students at MPS.
- Proposal outlines Population-Level Desired Results including academic and social-emotional results.
- MPS will track the academic performance and social-emotional wellbeing of students being tutored and mentored by the community partners at the student-level to determine the effectiveness of the tutoring and mentoring for each student.
- The partnership effectiveness data will be used to make decisions about expanding the partnership to include other community agencies so that a larger number of students can be assisted.
- The proposed program's Advisory board will review the data generated from the partnership at their quarterly meetings to make decision about future directions and/or program modifications.

The project provides for a targeted, coherent, and sustainable partnership between MPS, MEF, and ASU. However, the applicant does not target resources or disaggregate the data for students facing significant challenges (such as Hispanic students and their particularly low graduation and college attendance rates). Therefore, Montgomery Public Schools scores in the center of the high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly meets the criteria for Absolute Priority 1.

The applicant presents a cogent and comprehensive plan to significantly improve learning and teaching through personalized learning.

The applicant is driven by the great division in educational outcomes within the MPS District.

The applicant directly addresses equity issues by clearly delineating the abysmal achievement gap between minority and Caucasian students.

The applicant has created the passion and determination in the teachers, principals, school personnel, and community members to put every effort into designing and supporting the Race3 application.

The applicant has committed to change the educational landscape of MPS by setting ambitious goals for student achievement in reading and math.

The MPS theory of action requires: 1) infrastructure upgrades, 2) extensive professional development, 3) community partnerships to allow students and parents internet access outside of school, 4) extended school time, 5) incentives to motivate teachers and students to fully commit to the reformation, 6) onsite technical assistance to ensure glitches are resolved quickly to avoid initial disillusionment, 7) an adequate and user-friendly data management system that can manage all student, teacher, District data, and 8) a strong stakeholder communication plan that includes consideration of stakeholder input.

Total	210	179

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0442AL-2 for Montgomery Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a reform vision which builds on their prior work of Adopting Common Core State Standards in ELA and Math and investing in Compass Learning Odyssey personal learning software system. Without more detail outlining how the district-wide educational reform will turnaround the lowest preforming schools, it is difficult to determine how the district-wide educational reform will effect student achievement or close the existing achievement gap. This is a crital goal of the applicants plan, therefore needs much more detail.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative describes the process for choosing all schools as one that will extend the reform vision that MPS proposed and committed to in 2011 which included all schools. In Table A2C "Column I" is not computed correctly I=(D/E)*100 which results in the applicant failing to present an accurate percentage of the Total LEA low-income population. The applicant does give the total number of participating students and educators, though individual schools have blanks for the total number of participating educators. The applicant fails to give the total number of participating students from low-income families and total number of participating high need students. By not describing the process used to choose participant schools and having incorrectly computed and missing data, the applicant does not present a complete representation of the students will be educationally impacted by the proposed changes nor the individual school

educators who will participate.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a plan for LEA wide reform which has the key goals of closing the achievement gap between minority and Caucasian students and improving learning outcomes for all students. The plan has a time line with activities and personal responsible for the activity, and the applicant has the long term deliverables of all students graduating career and college ready, increasing high school graduation rate to 95%, and increasing college enrollment rate to 80%. The rational for the activities are presented in the narrative, however Professional Development for Educators is weak in that the applicant indicates an general area of focus (increase knowledge and skills of teacher) but has not specifics as to what that PD will look like or how it will be implemented or the impact on student achievement. This is a critical piece of systematic reform needing more thought and planning.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision for growth is not ambitious. The plan lists the goals for student growth to increase by 3%-5% for most grades over a 5 year period of the grant. One would expect to see progress accelerate in the latter years of the grant as the systematic reform takes root. Additionally, Table A4a does not list performance nor growth targets for Caucasian students. Table A4b, similarly, does not project growth targets for Caucasian students. This results in the inability for the applicant to reach a listed key goal of improving learning outcomes for all students.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant currently has a record of limited success in the past four years by reducing the achievement gap by 3% - 4% in reading in grades 3-7 and by 6% in 3rd grade math. There is no evidence of any other grades closing the achievement gap. Prior to 2011-12 change in calculating the Graduation Rate, the applicant has an overall slight increase in Graduation Rate. In the Fall 2012, the MPS Superintendent, choose one of the nine persistently lowest achieving schools to implement significant restructuring. The applicant does not explain the rational for choosing the one school or sufficient explanation of the restructuring the staff, what innovative criteria was used to choose the new staff. The applicant only offers that 15 or 118 positions were filled with Teach for America teachers. There are no listed plans to continue this sort of reform over the life of the grant or plans to monitor how student achievement will be impacted by the school restructuring. Student data is currently made available to parents, students, and teachers using the INOW system. The applicant seeks to improve the scope of usage by stakeholders through the Odyssey system. This system change will give stakeholders greater access by providing alerts for intervention and instruction.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant currently post detailed budgets and financial information on their website monthly, salaries are available provided upon request, and yearly audits are conducted and made available to the public. The applicant as required by the State of Alabama has all schools post detailed budgets and financial information on their individual school websites to ensure financial transparency. The monthly update of financial information is highly transparent.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided letters of support from numerous agencies. The applicant does have written support of the State

Superintendent (who has already demonstrated willingness to allow two other districts sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments in the form of 1:1 laptop initiative). However, the applicant does not indicate how the state legal, statutory, or regulatory requirements have been modified to ensure the success of the current proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant made efforts to engage some stakeholders support in the form of Principals, Teachers, Central Office personnel, and 3 Community Leaders (only one of which was not associated with educational/leadership foundations). The applicant established an email account for school personnel to submit questions and offer support. The applicant does not give a complete picture of overall educational staff support for the application as there is no breakdown for the percentage of emails that were not favorable. Additionally, some educators may not have felt empowered to respond with questions or doubts given the nature of email. Nor does the applicant provide any evidence that parents, students, or the community at large were engaged in or buy into the proposal possess at all. Finally, there is no evidence that the applicant plans to further engage these groups of stakeholders.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence of a plan to outlining current needs and gaps and Table 5 outlines goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, as well as responsible parties. The narrative for the plan indicates a sound rationale. The rationale indicates that one key to the implementation of a personal learning environment is "extensive professional development," yet there is no evidence in the narrative or Table 5 which indicates that the applicant has a plan to address the critical area of professional development.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative outlines a strong plan for improving learning by personalizing the learning environment and approaches. The plan has the following high-quality components:

a. MPS created a Planning Committee in 2011 committed to creating Personal Learning Environments through the use of 21st Century Technology. (all classrooms have wireless software, Compass Learning software (system to address individual needs in pursuit of College and Career Readiness while providing up-to-date feedback to parents, students, and teachers), and PD for High School Technical High School Teachers.) This component targets the necessary Technology requirements with plans to expand as necessary in order to provide the proposed Personal Learning Environment.
b. MPS narrative proposes to increase internet bandwidth and purchase tablets for students, teachers for greater access Compass Learning Odyssey, and open community centers in low income neighborhoods. this component targets an area of need in the community by ensuring student access to the system outside of school hours.
c. The narrative includes Project based Learning and Saturday Academy components which are well thought out and offer students choice/diversity, yet are focused academically.
d. MPS Student Incentives narrative and table proposes incentives based on student growth and are age appropriate.

The applicant did not identify an overall District plan for monitoring student achievement nor any mechanisms to provide training/support to students to ensure their understand of how to use the tools/resources provided in the proposal in order to ensure that all the high quality pieces of the proposal meet expectations. These are critical areas to ensure systematic reform.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative has evidence of planning to engage educators in the training necessary to support their capacity to improve student's achievement through Teacher Leader Team and Community of Practice for Personal Learning. There is a

noticeable lack of specific details concerning how these groups will be trained before they undertake the huge task of ensuring all system educators have the necessary understanding and training to fully implement the proposal. The narrative does detail workshops and days of PD will be scheduled along with topical discussions but there is no description of the Topics for these PD. However, in Table 8, Goal 1 is to have Teachers prepared to effectively implement personal learning model with a start date of 2/1/13, given the lack of specific topics for the workshops and PD days, this timeline is not reasonable. Additionally, there is little discussion of providing feedback to principals about their effectiveness nor will superintendents be evaluated until 2014-15. Finally, the narrative is unclear about providing training for leaders to ensure effective feedback will be given after teacher evaluations. These critical components of the proposal have not been given sufficient in depth thought which result in the educational staff not having the tools or support needed to ensure massive systematic change.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant, for the most part, proposes policies that will facilitate systematic change though educator reform will be curtained by District and/or State Personal policies. MPS proposes to centralize all Race^3 staff in the main office to facilitate collaboration and communication, the narrative does not outline a plan to ensure this group provides support and/or services to all participating schools. The narrative outlines that School leadership teams will have flexibility and autonomy over most school level factors with the caveat that changes cannot violate District or State Personal policies. The proposal strongly supports giving students multiple and diverse opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards and to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a reasonable plan to ensure that the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning. The plan does outline levels of technical support, however, MPS reports that 58% of the student population does not have internet access in their homes which suggest that parents may need greater access to training in order to ensure effectiveness of the planed personal learning environment. There is no evidence of any planned parental workshops to support this need.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high quality plan which continuously monitors progress as well as provides stakeholders opportunities to offer feedback and has transparent procedures built into the plan. MPS plans to collect program data quarterly, hold stakeholder meetings to report the data, implement recommendations based on feedback and take actions through the Steering Committee. Finally the MPS website will house a link to report data to the general public.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high quality plan to communicate and engage internal and external stakeholders. The plan provides clear processes to get community engagement and feedback at regular intervals. Additionally, MPS plans to have surveys for feedback and suggestions, hold quarterly assemblies to update stakeholders, and include articles in school newspapers summarizing program data results. These strategies results in a high level of transparency and engagement with all stakeholders.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant selected 12 Performance Measures but failed to give sufficient rationale for choosing these measures. The applicant briefly outlines how the measures provide rigorous and formative data in regard to implementation success, by stating that, "a district-wide investment and reform of this magnitude will have a significant impact on student performance." The applicant did not explain how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a researched based plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top-District funded activities. The narrative describes the process as follows:

Overall score of participant progress report, level of participants, and attrition data will also be analyzed. These data will allow the applicant to track project outcome objectives. The evaluation activities described includes both qualitative and quantitative measures. The survey data will be examined by using multiple regression analysis, two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with discriminant analysis (DA), respectively. The use of data based on statistical analysis would enable the Leadership Team to personalize student learning that best meets the needs of the individual student.

The plan meets the requirements of a high quality plan in that there are key goals with corresponding activities and deliverables that will be used within a creditable system of evaluation to determine the effectives of the proposed plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a well-articulated rationale for investments and priorities which are well crafted to ensure effective project implementation. The applicant's projected budget is broken down by projects and is well thought out.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan for sustainability with includes making use of the Textbook Allocation and Federal Funds to continue the the proposed activities. The narrative indicates that as the reform takes root the continued need or textbooks will diminish, thus freeing allocations. Unfortunately, the narrative contains language which indicates that only "critical elements" (generally described as PD for teachers and principals) of the project will continue to be funded (Saturday Academies and teacher/student incentives will be cut) which call into question the level of systemic support for the proposed reform.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a targeted coherent sustainable partnership focused on the identified population. The narrative loosely addresses effectiveness by collecting aggregated data and sharing with the community partners in such a way as to make the data useful in improving results for participating students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

In the overall evaluation of the application, the proposal coherently and comprehensively addresses how to build on the core educational assurance areas through the use of personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards, however there is insufficient evidence of a commitment to the internal educator training and support to carry out the proposed task. The proposal seeks to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through Race3 program.

Total	**210**	**156**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0442AL-3 for Montgomery Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. This vision is shared by stakeholders as evidenced by the signatures of the administration, board, and teachers association, as well as the inclusion of letters of support and commitment. The letters detail progress to date within the district in addressing the goals and also demonstrate an understanding of what is being proposed. Prior work has been done to reach the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support as evidenced by:

-adopted common core standards

--invested in an electronic personalized learning system to be used district-wide

--included a data collection and management system which are articulated

--system currently being used for grade recovery and the intent is to expand it use district wide for all students through RTTT-D funds

It is unclear if the teachers have agreed to the teacher incentive plan as the timeline states that teachers would be recruited in Jan 2013 for participation in teacher incentive plan.

The timeline lists 5 professional development days in August 2013 and nothing prior which is late for a start up of training for educators.

The midyear evaluation is listed for November and December of 2013. This would be almost a year after the grant award. Having an evaluation scheduled so late, it is difficult to determine how the applicant will be able to track implementation closely to determine if the planned activities remain on track.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has already chosen to include all 31,338 students (1897 teachers and 129 principals/assistant principals) across the 52 schools in the district of which 43 are high need and 19 are persistently low achieving.   This ambitious approach was decided by the Personal Learning Environment Planning Committee after considering whether targeting specific schools, grade bands or subject areas was a sound strategy.

The team decided that including the entire district population was more in line with the district reform vision of 2011, is more inclusive, and is a more reasonable way to achieve equity.

The overall low income and low performing percentages still meet the criteria even if a few (17) of the schools have a population with a lower percentage of low income and/or low performing students and/or persistently low achieving. The applicant provided actual numbers and not estimates.

It is unclear why there are blank spaces for number of participating staff at 6 of the schools listed on the charts.

The applicant states that the principal/teacher evaluation plan will be developed and discussed in Jan. and Feb 2013. There is no evidence that there is already a system or that teachers and principals have been involved in prior discussions and development. Without the buy-in of these constituents, it is unrealistic to assume that this can be decided and agreed upon quickly. Neither the letter from the Alabama Educator Association or the Principal Association mentions a new evaluation system in their letters of support. Of the individual letters of support, one high school educator refers to an evaluation tied to student growth, but none of the others have a reference.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The *app*licant justifies inclusion of all students in all schools from the beginning of this funding. The applicant cites equity as a foundational belief that drives this decision to be a inclusive.   There are charts included which support the narrative and document intended outcomes by demographic sub groups of students across the entire school district.

Although Prekindergarten is listed as a level in some of the schools to be served, the applicant does not specifically address this age span, and there is no mention of how this group will be served, or if there will be an attempt to include these children after the end of the funding cycle. The description of the personal learning system is K-12. The applicant does not mention reviewing any other materials or targeting this group, but the application does say that the entire district population will be served so this is confusing.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has included annual goals by year, by subject area, and by subgroup. These goals are achieveable, but are not ambitious. Gaps in achievement are projected to close, but not with all subgroups at the same level. For example, the Hispanic subgroup will still be the subgroup that is the farthest behind.

The applicant has data and projections in a chart, but does not elaborate on how the decision was made to use these numbers.

It is unclear how this information compares to the state projections so there is no way to evaluate if these goals meet or exceed the State ESEA targets for LEAs as noted in the criteria.

The applicant chose not to address the optional goal of post secondary degree attainment, and the score was not adversely affected by this decision.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score

(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has documented a record of success over the past four years. For example, there has been a range of 3-6% closures in academic achievement gaps between African American and Caucasian students in grades 3, 4, 6, 7 for reading and also in grade 3 math.

The applicant did not provide information about academic growth of Hispanic students over the same timeframe. This omission of information makes it impossible to know if the achievement gaps have lessened or have grown over that same 4 year timeframe. It also is not possible for the applicant to accurately plan for and project learning strategies for this student group.

The calculation process for high school graduation data has been changed by the state resulting in a 20% drop from the previous year, so it is not possible to accurately compare percentages across the years. Growth will have to be measured going forward.

The applicant plans to provide daily updates on academic learning through a web based program. Administrators, teachers, parents and students will have access to this information. Therefore, meaningful decisions can be made based on real time data.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that all financial data including detailed monthly budgets are posted on the MPS website for public review. The applicant does not state that this information is shared at the school level nor whether the expenditures are detailed for instruction, instructional support, pupil support and school administration on the website. The applicant does not include a sample website page so there is insufficient information provided to be able to evaluate how well the applicant meets this criteria.

The applicant does not clarify if the data on the biannual Civil Rights Data Collection submission report is the same as the F33 survey of local government finances data which is requested for this proposal requirement so it is unclear if the applicant met the requirements of this criteria.

The page referenced in the Appendix labeled OCR Data Collection Information has data listed by school: Pers. Sal Total, Pers. Sal. Instr., Non Pers. Exp., Pers. Sal. Amt and FTE. It is not clear if these are the same categories as the F33 survey of local government finances data form so it is not possible to determine if the applicant is able to meet this criteria.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a favorable context for successful implementation of what has been proposed based upon current condtions and support as evidenced below:

----The applicant states that the State Superintendent of Schools and the State Board support innovative practices for all schools not just charters to ensure they are meeting the needs of all students.

---Autonomy has already been given for personalized learning environments and use of technology in two districts in the state so there are successful state models from which to learn and gain support in the implementation of both personalized learning and technology..

---The SchoolDistrict Superintendent supports innovation and has already reconstituted a high school in the district vacating 118 certificated tenured and non-tenured staff members and replacing some of them with proven Teach For America teachers. This shows a top administrator who is willing to change the 'business as usual' model and do whatever it takes to move the entire system forward with bold moves at the building level.

---The Governor, the Mayor, and elected officials at the state level have written letters of support and will be able to remove obstacles as needed. This is added support for implementation.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant formed a Race to the Top Planning/Advisory Committee which had principal and teacher representatives from elementary, middle and high schools as well as central office administrators. In addition there were 3 community representatives. Having a variety of peers in the planning and advising of the proposed activities strengthens the plan and heightens the chance for successful implementation upon funding.

The list of committee members does not include a teacher association representative, business leaders, students, parents, college/university representatives, an evaluator, and/or social service agency representatives. Inclusion of these categories would strengthen the committee.

The applicant includes evidence of comments, questions and suggestions received through an email account that was established for feedback from all personnel. There is no evidence that any of the feedback received was incorporated into the proposal which is limiting.

There is a statement that the local teachers' association president signed in support of this initiative, but there is no evidence that he/the association was represented on the committee, or that his/the association's input was solicited during the planning process.

The Board of Education unanimously approved the proposal.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The following issues are cited to support the lower score:

The logic model included in the application is not clearly stated so full points could not be awarded.

The applicant reports that a self-study was conducted which highlighted a significant achievement gap, low graduation rate, and the need for a better data management system.   There is no explanation of the process used, or who was involved in determining the results.

In 2011 a school improvement committee recommended implementing a personal learning model to address low student performance. The applicant included a chart which lists tasks, a time span for completion, ultimate outcomes and people involved, but they did not include a high quality plan in this section as there are limited details included in the chart.

It is unclear how activities will be implemented. Some of the timeframes are quite lengthy and vague so it is unlikely that the implementation can begin immediately.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has written a high quality plan (as evidenced by the content listed below) for improving learning and teaching which includes goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible party:

---The plan includes the purchase of tablets for all students and teachers, individualized software for deep learning and personal academic interests and targets which are linked to college and career ready standards.

---The software has intuitive features and offers a complete learning experience with constant feedback.

---The applicant states that the common core standards have been adopted by the district.

---Data will be available on a daily basis so students, parents, teachers, and administrators will have useful, up to date information on personal learning environment which is aligned to the college and career ready graduation requirements.

---The Planning Committee conducted an extensive search of management systems that provided a personal learning environment based on college and career ready standards. The Odyssey software was recommended as cost effective (fixed price not dependent on numbers of students), it had an interface with a data management system, could be used without textbooks, and it was comprehensive in terms of instructional strategies, assessments, and multi leveled, high quality activities. The system includes project based learning in all core courses and at every grade level K-12.

--The emphasis will be on developing interdisciplinary projects that encourage inquiry and higher level thinking with problem solving being at the core. In addition, the soft skills that are critical to success in the workplace and at college will be addressed. Inclusion of this will strengthen the ability of each student to be career and college ready.

---Teacher leaders will work together to develop and evaluate the project based learning activities and will ensure that they include access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives so that students learn the strength of diversity of perspectives and develop an appreciation of the global community.

----The applicant has a detailed student incentives plan that will encourage students to excel and be reinforced for their efforts. With teachers, they will set short and long term goals with the ultimate goal of graduating on time and being college and career ready. Those needing additional learning time will have individual time with a teacher in the classroom or during the Saturday Academies. Those with high needs will have the same opportunities with additional levels of input, more variety in strategies and extended time for practice. The incentives have been carefully selected to be educationally related and attainable so that eventually the joy of learning in itself will be the only incentive needed. This strengthens the opportunity for persisently low achieving students to be successful learners.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching. For example:

---There will be multiple levels of professional development so teeachers can learn how to effectively implement personalized learning environments.

--- Communities of Practice for Personal Learning will plan their professional development and work with the teacher leadership team to create a plan that addresses concerns, successes, challenges, topics of discussion and sharing of breakthroughs within the Communities of Practice.

---The applicant will provide professional development in project based learning and in the use of the software for the personal learning environment.

---There will also be professional development opportunities in the area of data management and the related technology training to ensure ease of use so that there will be accurate, useful data on a daily basis. The data management system is secure and flexible enough that it can work electronically with the personalized software. Each morning data can be viewed in the aggregate by individual. It is accessible by student, family and educators.

---The applicant has hired a consulting firm that specializes in professional development in the areas of integrated project design, project assessment, and evaluation.

The applicant states that the principal/teacher evaluation plan will be developed and discussed in January and Februaury 2013. There is no evidence provided in the application to determine if there is already a system or that teachers and principals have been involved in prior discussions and development of an evaluation system that includes student growth as a component. Without documentation of the buy-in of these constituents, it is unrealistic to assume that this timeline is reasonable. Furthermore, neither the letter from the Alabama Educator Association or the Principal Association mentions a new evaluation system. Of the individual letters of support, one high school educator refers to an evaluation tied to student growth, but none of the others have a reference to this concept.

The applicant did not include sufficient information about the quality, background, and prior work of the consultants to determine if the individual and group needs of the educators will be met. It is unclear how the professional development needs of those who are not comfortable with technology will be met or that all levels and types of adult learning are recognized.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	**15**	**11**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has the policies, practices and rules in place to support the personalized learning as evidenced by:

--The proposed project director has experience working within the district so communication and collaboration will not be an issue. Her staff will also be housed within the central office to facilitate ease of developing positive relationships.

---Leadership teams at the school level have the authority to change school schedules and calendars, make personnel decisions, and control their budgets.

---Building level leadership can make decisions regarding roles and responsibilities of all personnel within the parameters of state and district HR policies.

---Students may progress and earn credit based on learning rather than traditional course completion.

----multiple methods of assessment can be used for students to demonstrate mastery.

The district will create policies to:

---eliminate the seat time requirement associated with credit awarded for course completion.

---have all student information available through a secure portal.

The applicant did not provide specific detail about the types of materials and supplies that will be purchased to assist the visual and hearing impaired so it is difficult to determine if they will be appropriate in providing the same level of options as being offered through the software selected for other students.

The applicant addresses learning of English through the software. It is not clear that the methodology includes oral and written practice for the students and the necessary interactions with other native speakers so that fluency can be achieved. There is also no indication that the software is capable of ensuring that content area learning for English Learners will be appropriately handled so that English Learners continue to progress cognitively with grade level academic learning while they are learning English.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

By addressing the following, the applicant has ensured that there will be sufficient infrastructure to support the personalized learning environment:

--The bandwidth at each school will be upgraded so each classroom is able to easily access the software with multiple users.

--The software for the learning materials is accessible offline. The assessments require internet access and for those without internet access, the Saturday Academies will have internet access as well as three community centers along with three large churches all of which are located within low income neighborhoods and will be accessible during non school hours.

--The software allows for the export of information related to learning and remediation and standards not yet met so that those seeking additional assistance from others outside of the school system will be accommodated.

The district plans to contract with an independent contractor to create a dashboard, ensure that the student information system is secure and that all of the electronic systems (learning, HR, financial, student records, etc.) are compatible and information can be easily used across platforms.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**13**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that there will be quarterly reviews on at least 31 data points which are listed in the proposal. The program data will be used to determine progress towards meeting program goals and objectives.

A summary of progress will be posted on the website and printed in the newspaper each quarter. This public display will make the information accessible to the public. There will also be an opportunity for the public to ask questions, make comments, and provide input to the applicant on the implementation. Upon review, the applicant can make any changes necessary in a timely manner based on feedback received.

The applicant will be working with an external evaluator who will provide continuous improvement data throughout the project. A complete plan is not included as it will be developed upon funding with the input of the stakeholders.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders on a quarterly basis. The strategies listed provide for 2 way communication---notification of stakeholders of the status of the implementation, and an opportunity to receive input from stakeholders on the program implementation. These effective strategies, as documented by the applicant, are clear and represent a high quality approach for linking effective communication with continuous improvement.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**2**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set an ambitious goal of 4% and believes that it is attainable based upon the success of a similar school district in the state.

The applicant has a change theory which has five pre-requisites to educational reform, 1) increase the knowledge and skills of teachers, 2) personalize the learning environment for each student, 3) alter the relationship of the student to the teacher and the learning environment, 4) provide transparency of student work for parents, and 5) provide teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations that incorporate student outcomes.

A chart is included which lists areas to measure, measurements and goals. here is insufficient detail as to the rationale for the choices and how the results will be used. The applicant has referenced an experienced external evaluator, but there is not enough information to understand what is being proposed in terms of an evaluation

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

A brief, generic description of the evaluation plan is included. The applicant has not provided enough information to determine if the proposed evaluation plan will yield the data needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the dollars invested in the program.

The external evaluator will meet with the project director and other stakeholders, upon funding, to form the evaluation questions, project focus, build consensus among groups, and create an opportunity for program participants to be involved in evaluation process. Included in the evaluation plan are interviews, surveys, observations, and other qualitative as well as quantitative measures. For example, surveys will be developed to measure: 1) teachers' teaching efficacy, awareness of best-practices, knowledge level; 2) students' progress in reaching grade level on college- and career-ready standards in language/reading and math; and 3) program effectiveness and demographic information. Other experts will consult to determine the face validity.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score

(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a budget narrative, summary and breakdown which is reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed project activities. A breakdown is also included by project which will give the implementers a better way to track budget information.

The applicant has carefully crafted a budget which combines the Race to the Top funds with other district, federal, state, and partner funds so that over time the project can be sustained. For example, the district money for textbooks will be re-appropriated to maintain the personal learning software.

The applicant does not provide for incentives beyond the grant funding as those will not be necessary once the program is consistently implemented over time. The purpose of the incentive was to jump start the project thus giving the students experience learning and reward teachers for their extra efforts to learn new strategies.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has documented a high quality plan focused on sustaining the ongoing programs/initiatives beyond the grant funding period and has documented the internal and external sources of funds.

As stated previously, the applicant has documented a record of success over the past four years in terms of closing the achievement gap at various grade levels with some subgroups. The applicant has chosen to include all schools in the district as a way to achieve equity. The applicant states a clear and credible approach to achieving the plan through a comprehensive system of personalized learning for each student and educator. The applicant has already invested in the system and will bring the implementation to scale through this grant funding.

The applicant did not include a budget breakdown for subsequent years beyond the 4 year funding.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**8**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is partnering with the educational foundation and a local university to provide mentoring, role models, and one-on-one assistance for high needs students in classrooms and after school. This support will focus on the academic and social emotional needs of students while they are being tutored and mentored. It will also ensure that the personal learning model will succeed.

A protocol has been developed so that those most in need and most likely to benefit will be selected to participate in the program.

The partners have identified the needs and the process by which the indicators of success can be measured. Mentor/tutors will be selected from specific groups/organizations on campus who will recruit and identify them for participation. The mentors/tutors will work directly with the targeted students, their families and their educators. There is a process for referral of those students to additional resources should the students need more assistance than the planned individual mentoring and tutoring can provide.

The applicant has described a well planned program that will enhance the components of the proposed services and programming ensuring that students have access to one more proven model of support in terms of individual focus on success in the improving academics through a personalized learning system, being college and career ready, increasing equity for a segment of the student population and providing role models at the college level so students are exposed to real life examples of success.

The applicant has not specifically addressed the needs of its low achieving Hispanic students through this competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the proposal, the applicant has addressed the absolute priority of personalized learning environments. The software selected supports this along with the professional development being proposed for the educators, the parent/family involvement and the optional project which focuses on mentoring and tutoring. This absolute priority is also addressed through strategies for college and career ready graduation discussions within the proposal.

This applicant has definitely met this absolute priority.

Total	**210**	**165**